

Spring Lake Bathing Pavilion, South  
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail  
On the Boardwalk at Atlantic Avenue  
Spring Lake  
Monmouth County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1093

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NJ  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SPRING LAKE BATHING PAVILION, SOUTH

HABS NO. NJ-1093

Location: Atlantic Avenue and the Boardwalk, Spring Lake, Monmouth County, New Jersey

Present Owner: Borough of Spring Lake  
Fifth and Warren Avenues  
Spring Lake, New Jersey 07762

Present Use: Pavilion and saltwater pool, with bathhouse facilities

Significance: This public project, together with the north pavilion, is ambitious for a small municipality. The pavilion has an open observation deck reminiscent of Victorian-era facilities, but executed in "modern" brick and concrete construction with decorative terracotta, art deco details.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The south pavilion was erected in 1929.
2. Architect: It was designed by E.M. Schmeider, borough architect and engineer
3. Original and subsequent owners: Borough of Spring Lake
4. Builders, suppliers: The builder was James Southerland (\$75,087). Suppliers include Campion Dangler, who provided the mechanical equipment and plumbing work (\$7,987); Lewis Vasu (spelling unclear), electrical (\$1,500); and Wooley Howland, ocean piping, strainers, and pilings (\$5,020).<sup>1</sup>
5. Original plans and construction: The Spring Lake Historical Society has an original plan of the north pavilion's ground floor.
6. Alterations and Additions: In 1938 the WPA paid for half the cost of a new wall enclosing the pool, and part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Figures from municipal files, awarding of contracts January 1929, courtesy of Mrs. Barbara Kolarsik.

pavilion. In 1991 the porch railings were replaced with a vertical-post cedar balustrade. The store, at an unknown point, was extended northward by a shed addition.

B. Historical Context:

Early photographs and atlases show that in the 1880s the beachfront that is now Spring Lake possessed several recreational facilities--generally small pavilions and bathhouses scattered on the beach. In 1926, a pair of late-nineteenth century wooden pavilions, located on the sites of the present pavilions, served ocean-goers. The pavilions had been privately owned, and operated by lessors, although in 1907 the town took over the lease for the northern pavilion. Spring Lake's Council minutes from the first decade of the twentieth century reflect several efforts to regulate the pavilion owners.<sup>2</sup> These earlier buildings--"constructed with large Stick Style brackets and balustraded flat roofs that double[d] as observation platforms"<sup>3</sup> had by 1926 outlived their usefulness. Mayor Hill described these old buildings as "antiquated, too small," and "far from being...ornament(s) to our beautiful beachfront." The borough, according to the Mayor, had received "much unfavorable criticism from our summer guests."<sup>4</sup>

In October 1926, Spring Lake's Mayor Hill and Council requested that plans for two new bathing pavilions be executed by the borough architect and engineer, E.H. Schneider. Once Schneider's sketches were approved, the town passed an ordinance to construct the bathing pavilions, financed with a \$250,000 bond issue. The borough built the south end pavilion in 1929, and the north end in 1931. A photo caption accompanying an 1931 article heralded the north building's completion: "This attractive, substantially constructed group recently completed offers the bather every pleasure and convenience under the most

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<sup>2</sup> Council minutes courtesy of Mrs. Barbara Kolarsik. The Spring Lake Improvement Company, which originally owned the beach and leased it to the borough, apparently built the southern pavilion. The northern pavilion was owned by the North End Pavilion Company.

<sup>3</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Section F, page 27.

<sup>4</sup> Spring Lake Gazette August 20, 1931, as quoted in Patricia Colrick and Philomena Motzel, "Historical Notes on Our Bathing Pavilions," Spring Lake Historical Society, Inc. Newsletter (Vol. 12, no.1, p.1).

ideal conditions."<sup>5</sup>

Spring Lake has been distinguished by its "genteel" landscape, broad and tree-lined streets, well-tended lawns, enormous private homes and hotels, and the shapely Spring Lake Pond.<sup>6</sup> Unlike so many Jersey shore communities, Spring Lake has prevented most commercial development on the beach. The bathing pavilions stand alone by the dunes; the pavilions' one or two shops are the only ones on the boardwalk.<sup>7</sup> After 1929, the city used a zoning ordinance to designate business areas, and hotel and residence zones; this was amended three years later to add a third zone for residence only. The business zoning clearly forbid, for example, "carousel, roller coasters, whirligigs, merry-go-rounds, ferris wheels or similar amusement devices."<sup>8</sup> Research might point to interesting issues relating to Spring Lake's land use regulation prior to zoning, and the ordinance's appearance the same year that construction on the new pavilions began.

Spring Lake's stately setting provides a plausible explanation for why such a small town would be willing to construct such "substantial" public buildings. Nonetheless, it would be provocative to document just how unusual the \$250,000 bond issue was for a small shore community, and to examine the circumstances of its approval. Other wealthy, non-commercial towns chose not to build such complete facilities; what explains Spring Lake's undertaking such a major project?

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION<sup>9</sup>

### A. General Statement:

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Spring Lake's National Register of Historic Places, Section F, page 25.

<sup>7</sup> The boardwalk itself from the 1880s was a series of privately-maintained walkways. The borough consolidated the walkways and took responsibility around 1904. The WPA in 1939 allowed the completion of the current boardwalk. Spring Lake's National Register of Historic Places, Section F, pages 25-6.

<sup>8</sup> Copies of Spring Lake ordinances, courtesy of the Borough Clerk's Office.

<sup>9</sup> The more detailed structural analysis relies upon Kaplan Gaunt DeSantis Raciti, Architects, Feasibility Study: Spring Lake Pool and Pavilion North and South (January 1992).

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1. Architectural character: The pavilion is built on an H-plan, echoing the openness of "Victorian" era wooden pavilions, but constructed in masonry and given "modern" decorative art deco details in terracotta.
2. Condition of fabric: The pavilion is in fair condition; renovation planned for fall 1992-Spring 1993

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This is a high one-story, H-shaped structure with an observation deck roof.
2. Foundations: The foundation is of "relatively massive" concrete grade beams, running east-west, supported by concrete pilings. A timber bulkhead lies between the pavilion and the beach, two feet below the sand.<sup>10</sup>
3. Walls: Bathhouse area walls consist of concrete blocks with a yellow brick face. The first-floor facade of the store is covered with wood panelling, painted white. Green-glazed terracotta tiles are embedded in the yellow-brick wall, portraying a crab, lobster, and frog and willows.
4. Structural system, framing: The structural system is of masonry walls; brick-encased steel columns support the overhanging portions of the structure.
5. Porches: The entire second floor consists of an open-air porch protected by a roof with beaded wood soffits. Square, yellow brick-encased steel columns ring the porch, while cedar wood porch railings with vertical slats were added in 1991.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The store doorway from the boardwalk is flanked by doric-style pilasters and has an entablature with a simple design on the frieze. A twelve-pane transom light lies above the entablature.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The flat-topped, hipped roof is

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<sup>10</sup> Kaplan Gaunt DeSantis Raciti, Architects, Feasibility Study: Spring Lake Pool and Pavilion North and South (January 1992) Attachment B, p.2.

composed of wood trusses, rafters and beams.

b. Cornice: There is a plain, unornamented cornice.

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Summer 1992

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old views: Spring Lake Historical Society

B. Primary and unpublished sources: The Spring Lake Historical Society has two folders on the pavilions--including contemporary articles and historical materials. Also helpful is a feasibility study for restoring the buildings dated January 1992, by Kaplan Gaunt DeSantis Raciti, Architects. The Mayor's office has Spring Lake Council Meeting minutes, and in the basement of the municipal building are boxes containing tax files, rough plans, and construction estimates. See also Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1991).

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian. The project was completed during summer 1992. The project historian was Alison Isenberg (University of Pennsylvania). The photography was produced by David Ames, University of Delaware, Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering.